

REMARKS

Upon entry of the present Amendment, claims 1-20 will be pending in the Application.

Claim 1 has been amended.

Claims 17-20 have been added to further define the claimed invention.

No claims have been canceled.

No new matter has been introduced by the foregoing amendments and new claims.

Amendments and additions to the claims, as set forth above, are made in order to streamline prosecution in this case by limiting examination and argument to certain claimed embodiments that presently are considered to be of immediate commercial significance. Amendment of the claims is not in any manner intended to, and should not be construed to, waive Applicants' right in the future to seek such unamended or cancelled subject matter, or similar matter (whether in equivalent, broader, or narrower form) in the present application, and any continuation, divisional, continuation-in-part, RCE, or any other application claiming priority to or through the present application, nor in any manner to indicate an intention, expressed or implied, to surrender any equivalent to the claims as pending after such amendments or cancellations.

Reconsideration is respectfully requested in view of the foregoing amendments and following remarks.

1. Rejection under 35 U.S.C. §112.

It is respectfully submitted that the title of the present Application has been amended to recite "PROCESS FOR PRODUCING MULTICOAT COLOR AND/OR EFFECT PAINT SYSTEMS CURABLE THERMALLY AND WITH ACTINIC RADIATION" as indicated above.

It is further respectfully submitted that independent claim 1, prior to amendment, was not contradictory. Applicants respectfully submit that the limitations objected to by the Examiner were subject to the presence of the related film (B) or (C) in the previous step. For example, step (III) recited applying at least one pigmented coating material (B) curable thermally and/or at least one pigmented coating material (B) curable thermally and with actinic radiation. Step (IV) recited exposing the at least one pigmented film (B) curable thermally and with actinic radiation to actinic radiation. Step (IV) implied that exposing the (B) to actinic radiation is if (B) was curable thermally and with actinic radiation. This is similar to the limitations concerning (C).

Applicants respectfully submit that independent claim 1 has been amended for clarity and in order to expedite the prosecution of this case. The limitations of claim 1 that were deleted were rewritten as dependent claims 17 and 18, and in addition independent claims 19 and 20 were added to further define the claimed invention.

Applicants respectfully submit that the amendment to claim 1 does not change the scope of the claim, but explicitly recites independent claim 1 in its broadest form.

Support for this amendment can be found at least in the Application as filed, page 24, line 15, to page 26, line 4. For example, Applicants disclose that it is preferred to use a coating material (B) which is curable thermally or is curable both thermally and with actinic radiation. (Page 24, lines 21-22). Where a dual cure film (B) is used, it is exposed to actinic radiation to give a partly cured film (B) which can still be thermally cured. (Page 25, lines 7-8, in support of Applicants' above submission that prior to amendment, step IV was in reference to when B is also curable with radiation). *Alternatively* or in addition to the dual-cure clearcoat material (C) it is possible to apply at least one clearcoat material (C) that is curable only with actinic radiation. (Page 25, lines 21-23, emphasis added, in support of Applicants' above submission that (C) can be either curable with actinic radiation or curable both thermally and with actinic radiation). If the clearcoat film (C) has already been fully cured, it is also possible for thermal curing to be omitted. (Page 26, lines 2-4, further in support of Applicants' amendment).

Applicants respectfully submit that the above amendments fully comply with the Office Action, and render the rejection of the present claims under 35 U.S.C. §112 moot. Applicants greatly appreciate the Examiner's indication that the claims would otherwise be allowable, and respectfully request the withdrawal of this rejection and the allowance of the claims.

CONCLUSION

Applicants respectfully submit that the Application and pending claims are patentable in view of the foregoing remarks. A Notice of Allowance is respectfully requested. As always, the Examiner is encouraged to contact the Undersigned by telephone if direct conversation would be helpful.

Respectfully Submitted,

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